Said to have been written by Dr. Shipley Bishop of St. Asaph

A

SPEECH,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SPOKEN

ON THE

BILL, &c.

[Price One Shilling.]

Bill read 15 April 1774

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A

SPEECH,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SPOKEN

ON THE

BILL

Great Britain. George III. King.
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FOR

ALTERING THE CHARTERS

OF THE

COLONY OF MASSACHUSETT'S BAY.

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THE Author of the following Speech might juſtify his manner of publiſhing it by very great authorities. Some of the nobleſt pieces of eloquence, the world is in poſſeſſion of, were not ſpoken on the great occaſions they were intended to ſerve, and ſeem to have been preſerved merely from the high ſenſe that was entertained of their merit.

The preſent performance appears in public from humbler but juſter motives: from the great national importance of the ſubject; from a very warm deſire and ſome faint hope of ſerving our country, by ſuggeſting a few of the uſeful truths which great men are apt to overlook.

The Author has abſtained moſt religiouſly from perſonal reflections. He has

cenſured no man, and therefore hopes he has offended no man. He feels moſt ſenſibly the misfortune of differing from many of thoſe whom he wiſhes to live and act with; and from ſome of as much virtue and ability as this kingdom affords. But there are alſo great authorities on the other ſide; and the greateſt authority can never perſuade him, that it is better to extort by force, what he thinks may be gained more ſurely by gentle means.

He looks upon power as a coarſe and mechanical inſtrument of government, and holds the uſe of it to be particularly dangerous to the relation that ſubſiſts between a mother-country and her colonies. In ſuch a caſe he doubts whether any point ought to be purſued, which cannot be carried by perſuaſion, by the ſenſe of a common intereſt, and the exerciſe of a moderate authority.

thority. He thinks it unneceſſary to lay down the limits of ſovereignty and obedience, and more unneceſſary to fight for them. If we can but reſtore that mutual regard and confidence, which formerly governed our whole intercourſe with our colonies, particular caſes will eaſily provide for themſelves. He acts the part of the trueſt patriot in this dangerous criſis, whether he lives at London or at Boſton, who purſues ſincerely the moſt lenient and conciliating meaſures; and wiſhes to reſtore the public peace by ſome better method than the ſlaughter of our fellow-citizens.

A SPEECH,

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SPEECH, &c.

IT is of ſuch great importance to compoſe or even to moderate the diſſentions, which ſubſiſt at preſent between our unhappy country and her colonies, that I cannot help endeavouring, from the faint proſpect I have of contributing ſomething to ſo good an end, to overcome the inexpreſſible reluctance I feel at uttering my thoughts before the moſt reſpectable of all audiences.

The true object of all our deliberations on this occaſion, which I hope we ſhall

never loſe ſight of, is a full and cordial reconciliation with North America. Now I own, my Lords, I have many doubts whether the terrors and puniſhments, we hang out to them at preſent, are the ſureſt means of producing this reconciliation. Let us at leaſt do this juſtice to the people of North America to own, that we can all remember a time when they were much better friends than at preſent to their mother country. They are neither our natural nor our determined enemies. Before the Stamp Act, we conſidered them in the light of as good ſubjects as the natives of any county in England.

It is worth while to enquire by what ſteps we firſt gained their affection, and preſerved it ſo long; and by what conduct we have lately loſt it. Such an enquiry may point out the means of reſtoring peace, and make the uſe of force unneceſſary againſt a people, whom I cannot yet forbear to conſider as our brethren.

It has always been a moſt arduous taſk to govern diſtant provinces, with even a tolerable appearance of juſtice. The vice-roys and governors of other nations are uſually temporary tyrants, who think themſelves obliged to make the moſt of their time; who not only plunder the people, but carry away their ſpoils, and dry up all the ſources of commerce and induſtry. Taxation in their hands, is an unlimited power of oppreſſion: but in whatever hands the power of taxation is lodged, it implies and includes all other powers. Arbitrary taxation is plunder authoriſed by law: It is the ſupport and the eſſence of tyranny; and has done more miſchief to mankind, than thoſe other three ſcourges from heaven, famine, peſtilence and the ſword. I need not carry your Lordſhips out of your own knowledge, or out of your own dominions, to make you conceive what miſery this right of taxation is capable of producing in a pro-

vincial government. We need only recollect that our countrymen in India, have in the ſpace of five or ſix years, in virtue of this right, deſtroyed, ſtarved and driven away more inhabitants from Bengal, than are to be found at preſent in all our American Colonies; more than all thoſe formidable numbers which we have been nurſing up for the ſpace of 200 years, with ſo much care and ſucceſs, to the aſtoniſhment of all Europe. This is no exaggeration, my Lords, but plain matter of fact, collected from the accounts ſent over by Mr. Haſtings, whoſe name I mention with honour and veneration. And I muſt own, ſuch accounts have very much leſſened the pleaſure I uſed to feel in thinking myſelf an Engliſhman. We ought ſurely not to hold our colonies totally inexcuſable for wiſhing to exempt themſelves from a grievance, which has cauſed ſuch unexampled devaſtation; and, my Lords, it would be too diſgraceful to ourſelves, to

try

try ſo cruel an experiment more than once. Let us reflect, that before theſe innovations were thought of, by following the line of good conduct which had been marked out by our anceſtors, we governed North America with mutual benefit to them and ourſelves. It was a happy idea, that made us firſt conſider them rather as inſtruments of commerce than as objects of government. It was wiſe and generous to give them the form and the ſpirit of our own conſtitution; an aſſembly in which a greater equality of repreſentation has been preſerved than at home; and councils and governors, ſuch as were adapted to their ſituation, tho' they muſt be acknowledged to be very inferior copies of the dignity of this Houſe, and the Majeſty of the Crown.

But what is far more valuable than all the reſt, we gave them liberty. We allowed them to uſe their own judgment in the manage-

management of their own intereſt. The idea of taxing them never entered our heads. On the contrary they have experienced our liberality on many public occaſions: we have given them bounties to encourage their induſtry, and have demanded no return but what every ſtate exacts from its colonies, the advantages of an excluſive commerce, and the regulations that are neceſſary to ſecure it. We made requiſitions to them on great occaſions, in the ſame manner as our princes formerly aſked benevolences of their ſubjects; and as nothing was aſked but what was viſibly for the public good, it was always granted; and they ſometimes did more than we expected. The matter of right was neither diſputed, nor even conſidered. And let us not forget that the people of New England were themſelves, during the laſt war, the moſt forward of all in the national cauſe; that every year we voted them a conſiderable ſum, in acknowledgement of their

their zeal and their ſervices; that in the preceding war, they alone enabled us to make the treaty of Aix la Chapelle, by furniſhing us with the only equivalent for the towns that were taken from our allies in Flanders; and that in times of peace, they alone have taken from us ſix times as much of our woollen manufactures, as the whole kingdom of Ireland. Such a colony, my Lords, not only from the juſtice, but from the gratitude we owe them, have a right to be heard in their defence; and if their crimes are not of the moſt inexpiable kind, I could almoſt ſay, they have a right to be forgiven.

But in the times we ſpeak of, our public intercourſe was carried on with eaſe and ſatisfaction. We regarded them as our friends and fellow-citizens, and relied as much upon their fidelity as on the inhabitants of our own country. They ſaw our power with pleaſure; for they conſidered

dered it only as their protection. They inherited our laws, our language, and our cuſtoms; they preferred our manufactures, and followed our faſhions with a partiality, that ſecured our excluſive trade with them, more effectually than all the regulations and vigilance of the cuſtom-houſe. Had we ſuffered them to enrich us a little longer, and to grow a little richer themſelves, their men of fortune, like the Weſt-Indians, would undoubtedly have made this country their place of education and reſort. For they looked up to England with reverence and affection, as to the country of their friends and anceſtors. They eſteemed and they called it their home, and thought of it as the Jews once thought of the Land of Canaan.

Now, my Lords, conſider with yourſelves what were the chains and ties that united this people to their mother-country, with ſo much warmth and affection, at ſo amaz-

ing

ing a diſtance. The colonies of other nations have been diſcontented with their treatment, and not without ſufficient cauſe; always murmuring at their grievances, and ſometimes breaking out into acts of rebellion. Our ſubjects at home, with all their reaſons for ſatisfaction, have never been entirely ſatisfied. Since the beginning of this century we have had two rebellions, ſeveral plots and conſpiracies; and we ourſelves have been witneſſes to the moſt dangerous exceſſes of ſedition. But the provinces in North America have engaged in no party, have excited no oppoſition; they have been utter ſtrangers even to the name of Whig and Tory. In all changes, in all revolutions, they have quietly followed the fortunes and ſubmitted to the government of England.

Now let me appeal to your Lordſhips as to men of enlarged and liberal minds, who have been led by your office and rank to

the ſtudy of hiſtory. Can you find in the long ſucceſſion of ages, in the whole extent of human affairs, a ſingle inſtance, where diſtant provinces have been preſerved in ſo flouriſhing a ſtate, and kept at the ſame time in ſuch due ſubjection to their mother country? My Lords, there is no inſtance; the caſe never exiſted before. It is perhaps the moſt ſingular phænomenon in all civil hiſtory; and the cauſe of it well deſerves your ſerious conſideration. The true cauſe is, that a mother country never exiſted before, who placed her natives and her colonies on the ſame equal footing; and joined with them in fairly carrying on one common intereſt.

You ought to conſider this, my Lords, not as a mere hiſtorical fact, but as a moſt important and invaluable diſcovery. It enlarges our ideas of the power and energy of good government beyond all former examples; and ſhews that it can act like gravitation

vitation at the greateſt diſtances. It proves to a demonſtration that you may have good ſubjects in the remoteſt corners of the earth, if you will but treat them with kindneſs and equity. If you have any doubts of the truth of this kind of reaſoning, the experience we have had of a different kind will entirely remove them.

The good genius of our country had led us to the ſimple and happy method of governing freemen, which I have endeavoured to deſcribe. Our miniſters received it from their predeceſſors, and for ſome time continued to obſerve it; but without knowing its value. At length, preſuming on their own wiſdom, and the quiet diſpoſition of the Americans, they flattered themſelves that we might reap great advantages from their proſperity by deſtroying the cauſe of it. They choſe in an unlucky hour to treat them as other nations have thought fit to treat their colonies; they threatened and they taxed them.

I do not now enquire whether taxation is matter of right; I only conſider it as matter of experiment; for ſurely the art of government itſelf is founded on experience. I need not ſuggeſt what were the conſequences of this change of meaſures. The evils produced by it were ſuch as we ſtill remember and ſtill feel. We ſuffered more by our loſs of trade with them, than the wealth flowing in from India was able to recompence. The bankruptcy of the Eaſt India Company, may be ſufficiently accounted for by the rapine abroad and the knavery at home; but it certainly would have been delayed ſome years, had we continued our commerce with them in the ſingle article of tea. But that and many other branches of trade have been diverted into other channels, and may probably never return intire to their old courſe. But what is worſt of all, we have loſt their confidence and friendſhip; we have

have ignorantly undermined the moſt ſolid foundation of our own power.

In order to obſerve the ſtricteſt impartiality, it is but juſt for us to enquire what we have gained by theſe taxes as well as what we have loſt. I am aſſured that out of all the ſums raiſed in America the laſt year but one, if the expences are deducted, which the natives would elſe have diſcharged themſelves, the net revenue paid into the Treaſury to go in aid of the ſinking fund, or to be employed in whatever public ſervices parliament ſhall think fit, is eighty-five pounds. Eighty-five pounds, my Lords, is the whole equivalent, we have received for all the hatred and miſchief, and all the infinite loſſes this kingdom has ſuffered during that year in her diſputes with North America. Money that is earned ſo dearly as this, ought to be expended with great wiſdom and œconomy. My Lords, were

you

you to take up but one thouſand pounds more from North America upon the ſame terms, the nation itſelf would be a bankrupt. But the moſt amazing and the moſt alarming circumſtance is ſtill behind. It is that our caſe is ſo incurable, that all this experience has made no impreſſion upon us. And yet, my Lords, if you could but keep theſe facts, which I have ventured to lay before you, for a few moments in your minds, (ſuppoſing your right of taxation to be never ſo clear) yet I think you muſt neceſſarily perceive that it cannot be exerciſed in any manner that can be advantageous to ourſelves or them. We have not always the wiſdom to tax ourſelves with propriety; and I am confident we could never tax a people at that diſtance, without infinite blunders, and infinite oppreſſion. And to own the truth, my Lords, we are not honeſt enough to truſt ourſelves with the power of ſhifting our own burthens upon them. Allow me,

therefore,

therefore, to conclude, I think, unanſwerably, that the inconvenience and diſtreſs we have felt in this change of our conduct, no leſs than the eaſe and tranquility we formerly found in the purſuit of it, will force us, if we have any ſenſe left, to return to the good old path we trod in ſo long, and found it the way of pleaſantneſs.

I deſire to have it underſtood, that I am oppoſing no rights that our legiſlature may think proper to claim: I am only comparing two different methods of government. By your old rational and generous adminiſtration, by treating the Americans as your friends and fellow-citizens, you made them the happieſt of human kind; and at the ſame time drew from them, by commerce, more clear profit than Spain has drawn from all its mines; and their growing numbers were a daily-increaſing addition to your ſtrength. There was no

room

room for improvement or alteration in ſo noble a ſyſtem of policy as this. It was ſanctified by time, by experience, by public utility. I will venture to uſe a bold language, my Lords; I will aſſert, that if we had uniformly adopted this equitable, adminiſtration in all our diſtant provinces as far as circumſtances would admit, it would have placed this country, for ages, at the head of human affairs in every quarter of the world. My Lords, this is no viſionary or chimerical doctrine. The idea of governing provinces and colonies by force is viſionary and chimerical. The experiment has often been tried and it has never ſucceeded. It ends infallibly in the ruin of the one country or the other, or in the laſt degree of wretchedneſs.

If there is any truth, my Lords, in what I have ſaid, and I moſt firmly believe it all to be true; let me recommend it to you to reſume that generous and benevolent

ſpirit in the diſcuſſion of our differences, which uſed to be the ſource of our union. We certainly did wrong in taxing them: when the Stamp Act was repealed, we did wrong in laying on other taxes, which tended only to keep alive a claim, that was miſchievous, impracticable and uſeleſs. We acted contrary to our own principles of liberty, and to the generous ſentiments of our ſovereign, when we deſired to have their judges dependent on the crown for their ſtipends as well as their continuance. It was equally unwiſe to wiſh to make the governors independent of the people for their ſalaries. We ought to conſider the governors, not as ſpies intruſted with the management of our intereſt, but as the ſervants of the people, recommended to them by us. Our ears ought to be open to every complaint againſt the governors; but we ought not to ſuffer the governors to complain of the people. We have taken a different method, to which no

ſmall part of our difficulties are owing. Our ears have been open to the governors and ſhut to the people. This muſt neceſſarily lead us to countenance the jobbs of intereſted men, under the pretence of defending the rights of the crown. But the people are certainly the beſt judges whether they are well governed; and the crown can have no rights inconſiſtent with the happineſs of the people.

Now, my Lords, we ought to do what I have ſuggeſted, and many things more, out of prudence and juſtice, to win their affection, and to do them public ſervice. If we have a right to govern them, let us exert it for the true ends of government. But, my Lords, what we ought to do, from motives of reaſon and juſtice, is much more than is ſufficient to bring them to a reaſonable accommodation. For thus, as I apprehend, ſtands the caſe. They petition for the repeal of an act of parliament, which they

they complain of as unjuſt and oppreſſive. And there is not a man amongſt us, not the warmeſt friend of adminiſtration, who does not ſincerely wiſh that act had never been made. In fact, they only aſk for what we wiſh to be rid of. Under ſuch a diſpoſition of mind, one would imagine there could be no occaſion for fleets and armies to bring men to a good underſtanding. But, my Lords, our difficulty lies in the point of honour. We muſt not let down the dignity of the mother-country; but preſerve her ſovereignty over all the parts of the Britiſh Empire. This language has ſomething in it that ſounds pleaſant to the ears of Engliſhmen, but is otherwiſe of little weight. For ſure, my Lords, there are methods of making reaſonable conceſſions, and yet without injuring our dignity. Miniſters are generally fruitful in expedients to reconcile difficulties of this kind, to eſcape the embarraſſments of forms, the competitions of dignity and

precedency; and to let clashing rights sleep, while they transact their business. Now, my Lords, on this occasion can they find no excuse, no pretence, no invention, no happy turn of language, not one colourable argument for doing the greatest service, they can ever render to their country? It must be something more than incapacity that makes men barren of expedients at such a season as this. Do, but for once, remove this impracticable stateliness and dignity, and treat the matter with a little common sense and a little good humour, and our reconciliation would not be the work of an hour. But after all, my Lords, if there is any thing mortifying in undoing the errors of our ministers, it is a mortification we ought to submit to. If it was unjust to tax them, we ought to repeal it for their sakes; if it was unwise to tax them, we ought to repeal it for our own. A matter so trivial in itself as the three-penny duty upon tea, but which has given cause

to

to ſo much national hatred and reproach, ought not to be ſuffered to ſubſiſt an unneceſſary day. Muſt the intereſt, the commerce and the union of this country and her colonies, be all of them ſacrificed to ſave the credit of one imprudent meaſure of adminiſtration? I own I cannot comprehend that there is any dignity either in being in the wrong, or in perſiſting in it. I have known friendſhip preſerved and affection gained, but I never knew dignity loſt, by the candid acknowledgement of an error. And, my Lords, let me appeal to your own experience of a few years backward (I will not mention particulars, becauſe I would paſs no cenſures and revive no unpleaſant reflections) but I think every candid miniſter muſt own, that adminiſtration has ſuffered in more inſtances than one, both in intereſt and credit, by not chuſing to give up points, that could not be defended.

With

With regard to the people of Boſton, I am free to own that I neither approve of their riots nor their puniſhment. And yet if we inflict it as we ought, with a conſciouſneſs that we were ourſelves the aggreſſors, that we gave the provocation, and that their diſobedience is the fruit of our own imprudent and imperious conduct, I think the puniſhment cannot riſe to any great degree of ſeverity.

I own my Lords, I have read the report of the Lords Committees of this houſe, with very different ſentiments from thoſe with which it was drawn up. It ſeems to be deſigned, that we ſhould conſider their violent meaſures and ſpeeches, as ſo many determined acts of oppoſition to the ſovereignity of England, ariſing from the malignity of their own hearts. One would think the mother country had been totally ſilent and paſſive in the progreſs of the whole affair. I on the contrary conſider

theſe violences as the natural effects of ſuch meaſures as ours on the minds of freemen. And this is the moſt uſeful point of view, in which government can conſider them. In their ſituation, a wiſe man would expect to meet with the ſtrongeſt marks of paſſion and imprudence, and be prepared to forgive them. The firſt and eaſieſt thing to be done is to correct our own errors; and I am confident we ſhould find it the moſt effectual method to correct theirs. At any rate let us put ourſelves in the right; and then if we muſt contend with North America, we ſhall be unanimous at home, and the wiſe and the moderate there will be our friends. At preſent we force every North American to be our enemy; and the wiſe and moderate at home, and thoſe immenſe multitudes, which muſt ſoon begin to ſuffer by the madneſs of our rulers, will unite to oppoſe them. It is a ſtrange idea we have taken up, to cure their reſentments by increaſing

creaſing their provocations; to remove the effects of our own ill conduct, by multiplying the inſtances of it. But the ſpirit of blindneſs and infatuation is gone forth. We are hurrying wildly on without any fixed deſign, without any important object. We purſue a vain phantom of unlimited ſovereignty, which was not made for man; and reject the ſolid advantages of a moderate, uſeful and intelligible authority. That juſt God, whom we have all ſo deeply offended, can hardly inflict a ſeverer national puniſhment, than by committing us to the natural conſequences of our own conduct. Indeed, in my opinion a blacker cloud never hung over this Iſland.

To reaſon conſiſtently with the principles of juſtice and national friendſhip, which I have endeavoured to eſtabliſh, or rather to revive what was eſtabliſhed by our anceſtors, as our wiſeſt rule of conduct

for

for the government of America; I muſt neceſſarily diſapprove of the Bill before us; for it contradicts every one of them. In our preſent ſituation every act of the legiſlature, even our acts of ſeverity ought to be ſo many ſteps towards the reconciliation we wiſh for. But to change the government of a people, without their conſent, is the higheſt and moſt arbitrary act of ſovereignty, that one nation can exerciſe over another. The Romans hardly ever proceeded to this extremity even over a conquered nation, till its frequent revolts and inſurrections had made them deem it incorrigible. The very idea of it, implies a moſt total abject and ſlaviſh dependency in the inferior ſtate. Recollect that the Americans are men of like paſſions with ourſelves, and think how deeply this treatment muſt affect them. They have the ſame veneration for their charters, that we have for our Magna Charta, and they ought in reaſon to have greater. They

are the title deeds to all their rights both public and private. What? my Lords, muſt theſe rights never acquire any legal aſſurance and ſtability? Can they derive no force from the peaceable poſſeſſion of near two hundred years? And muſt the fundamental conſtitution of a powerful ſtate, be for ever ſubject to as capricious alterations as you may think fit to make, in the charters of a little mercantile company or the corporation of a borough? This will undoubtedly furniſh matter for a more pernicious debate than has yet been moved. Every other colony will make the caſe its own. They will complain that their rights can never be aſcertained; that every thing belonging to them depends upon our arbitrary will; and may think it better to run any hazard, than to ſubmit to the violence of their mother country, in a matter in which they can ſee neither moderation nor end:

But

But let us coolly enquire, what is the reaſon of this unheard of innovation. Is it to make them peaceable? My Lords, it will make them mad. Will they be better governed if we introduce this change? Will they be more our friends? The leaſt that ſuch a meaſure can do, is to make them hate us. And would to God, my Lords, we had governed ourſelves with as much œconomy, integrity and prudence as they have done. Let them continue to enjoy the liberty our fathers gave them. Gave them, did I ſay? They are coheirs of liberty with ourſelves; and their portion of the inheritance has been much better looked after than ours. Suffer them to enjoy a little longer that ſhort period of public integrity and domeſtic happineſs, which ſeems to be the portion allotted by Providence to young riſing ſtates. Inſtead of hoping that their conſtitution may receive improvement from our ſkill in government, the

moſt uſeful wiſh I can form in their favour is, that heaven may long preſerve them from our vices and our politicks.

Let me add farther, that to make any changes in their government, without their conſent, would be to tranſgreſs the wiſeſt rules of policy, and to wound our moſt important intereſts. As they increaſe in numbers and in riches, our comparative ſtrength muſt leſſen. In another age, when our power has begun to loſe ſomething of its ſuperiority, we ſhould be happy if we could ſupport our authority by mutual goodwill and the habit of commanding; but chiefly by thoſe original eſtabliſhments, which time and public honour might have rendered inviolable. Our poſterity will then have reaſon to lament that they cannot avail themſelves of thoſe treaſures of public friendſhip and confidence which our fathers had wiſely hoarded up, and we are throwing away. 'Tis hard, 'tis cruel, beſides all our debts

and

and taxes, and thoſe enormous expences which are multiplying upon us every year, to load our unhappy ſons with the hatred and curſes of North America. Indeed, my Lords, we are treating poſterity very ſcurvily. We have mortgaged all the lands; we have cut down all the oaks; we are now trampling down the fences, rooting up the ſeedlings and ſamplers, and ruining all the reſources of another age. We ſhall ſend the next generation into the world, like the wretched heir of a worthleſs father, without money, credit or friends; with a ſtripped, incumbered, and perhaps untenanted eſtate.

Having ſpoke ſo largely againſt the principle of the bill, it is hardly neceſſary to enter into the merits of it. I ſhall only obſerve, that even if we had the conſent of the people to alter their government, it would be unwiſe to make ſuch alterations as theſe. To give the appointment of the

governor

governor and council to the crown, and the diſpoſal of all places, even of the judges, and with a power of removing them, to the governor, is evidently calculated with a view to form a ſtrong party in our favour. This I know has been done in other colonies; but ſtill this is opening a ſource of perpetual diſcord, where it is our intereſt always to agree. If we mean any thing by this eſtabliſhment, it is to ſupport the governor and the council againſt the people, i. e. to quarrel with our friends, that we may pleaſe their ſervants. This ſcheme of governing them by a party is not wiſely imagined, it is much too premature, and, at all events, muſt turn to our diſadvantage. If it fails, it will only make us contemptible; if it ſucceeds, it will make us odious. It is our intereſt to take very little part in their domeſtic adminiſtration of government, but purely to watch over them for their good. We never gained ſo much by North America as when we let them govern

vern themſelves, and were content to trade with them and to protect them. One would think, my Lords, there was ſome ſtatute law, prohibiting us, under the ſevereſt penalties, to profit by experience.

My Lords, I have ventured to lay my thoughts before you, on the greateſt national concern that ever came under your deliberation, with as much honeſty as you will meet with from abler men, and with a melancholy aſſurance, that not a word of it will be regarded. And yet, my Lords, with your permiſſion, I will waſte one ſhort argument more on the ſame cauſe, one that I own I am fond of, and which contains in it, what, I think, muſt affect every generous mind. My Lords, I look upon North America as the only great nurſery of freemen now left upon the face of the earth. We have ſeen the liberties of Poland and Sweden ſwept away, in the courſe of one year, by treachery and uſurpation. The three

free towns in Germany are like ſo many dying ſparks, that go out one after another; and which muſt all be ſoon extinguiſhed under the deſtructive greatneſs of their neighbours. Holland is little more than a great trading company, with luxurious manners, and an exhauſted revenue; with little ſtrength and with leſs ſpirit. Switzerland alone is free and happy within the narrow incloſure of its rocks and vallies. As for the ſtate of this country, my Lords, I can only refer myſelf to your own ſecret thoughts. I am diſpoſed to think and hope the beſt of Public Liberty. Were I to deſcribe her according to my own ideas at preſent, I ſhould ſay that ſhe has a ſickly countenance, but I truſt ſhe has a ſtrong conſtitution.

But whatever may be our future fate, the greateſt glory that attends this country, a greater than any other nation ever acquired,

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is to have formed and nurſed up to ſuch a ſtate of happineſs, thoſe colonies whom we are now ſo eager to butcher. We ought to cheriſh them as the immortal monuments of our public juſtice and wiſdom; as the heirs of our better days, of our old arts and manners, and of our expiring national virtues. What work of art, or power, or public utility has ever equalled the glory of having peopled a continent without guilt or bloodſhed, with a multitude of free and happy common-wealths; to have given them the beſt arts of life and government; and to have ſuffered them under the ſhelter of our authority, to acquire in peace the ſkill to uſe them. In compariſon of this, the policy of governing by influence, and even the pride of war and victory are diſhoneſt tricks and poor contemptible pageantry.

We ſeem not to be ſenſible of the high and important truſt which providence has committed to our charge. The moſt precious remains of civil liberty, that the world can

now boaſt of, are lodged in our hands; and God forbid that we ſhould violate ſo ſacred a depoſit. By enſlaving your colonies, you not only ruin the peace, the commerce, and the fortunes of both countries; but you extinguiſh the faireſt hopes, ſhut up the laſt aſylum of mankind. I think, my Lords, without being weakly ſuperſtitious, that a good man may hope that heaven will take part againſt the execution of a plan which ſeems big, not only with miſchief, but impiety.

Let us be content with the ſpoils and the deſtruction of the eaſt. If your Lordſhips can ſee no impropriety in it, let the plunderer and the oppreſſor ſtill go free. But let not the love of liberty be the only crime you think worthy of puniſhment. I fear we ſhall ſoon make it a part of our natural character, to ruin every thing that has the misfortune to depend upon us.

No nation has ever before contrived, in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, without any war or public calamity (unleſs unwiſe meaſures may be ſo called) to deſtroy ſuch ample reſources of commerce, wealth and power, as of late were ours, and which, if they had been rightly improved, might have raiſed us to a ſtate of more honourable and more permanent greatneſs than the world has yet ſeen.

Let me remind the noble Lords in adminiſtration, that before the ſtamp act, they had power ſufficient to anſwer all the juſt ends of government, and they were all compleatly anſwered. If that is the power they want, though we have loſt much of it at preſent, a few kind words would recover it all.

But if the tendency of this bill is, as I own it appears to me, to acquire a power of governing them by influence and corruption; in the firſt place, my Lords, this

is not true government, but a ſophiſticated kind, which counterfeits the appearance, but without the ſpirit or virtue of the true: and then, as it tends to debaſe their ſpirits and corrupt their manners, to deſtroy all that is great and reſpectable in ſo conſiderable a part of the human ſpecies, and by degrees to gather them together with the reſt of the world, under the yoke of univerſal ſlavery; I think, for theſe reaſons, it is the duty of every wiſe man, of every honeſt man, and of every Engliſhman, by all lawful means, to oppoſe it.

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